



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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United States Sending Diplomatic Mission to Ethiopia, Eritrea

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- The United States is sending a high-level delegation to the horn of Africa for a diplomatic initiative to defuse political tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea and get the border demarcation process back on track, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton announced January 9.

After a private meeting with the Security Council,

Bolton said that the United States is "prepared to undertake an initiative to see if we could move forward on the demarca-



Jendayi Frazer

tion process" with a delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer and General Carlton Fulford, director of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, a

Defense Department regional center for security studies.

"I made it clear to the council there were no promises, no guarantees. I did not want to overstate what we are undertaking," Bolton told journalists after the meet-

ing. "We were proceeding realistically here, but we felt that this kind of diplomatic initiative could bring movement on the underlying political dispute."

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U.S. Urges Ethiopia To Give Opposition Leaders Fair Hearing

The United States remains "gravely concerned" by actions of the government of Ethiopia in jailing opposition leaders and others, including staff members of the Voice of America, and charging them with capital offenses. The government also denied bail to and refused to hear statements from those charged.



Sean McCormack, State Department spokesman

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack issued a statement January 6 saying thousands more Ethiopians arrested since early November 2005 remain detained without charges.

He urged prompt release of those not charged and a fair, transparent and speedy trial for those

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United States Sending Diplomatic Mission to Ethiopia, Eritrea . . .

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Bolton asked the Security Council not to take any action relating to the border dispute in order "not to send any signals politically or otherwise that might complicate" the mission. He also requested the council, for the next 30 days, to "freeze the status quo" regarding Eritrea's recently imposed restrictions on Western military personnel serving in the U.N. peacekeeping mission (UNMEE) while the U.S. initiative proceeds. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=December&x=20051207182433atiaj0.4475061&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).)

The ambassador said he would keep the 15-nation Security Council informed on developments.

Ambassador Augustine Mahiga of Tanzania, president of the Security Council, said that the council "is very pleased, indeed, by the initiative of the United States" and will await the outcome of the diplomatic efforts.

U.N. Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guehenno also hailed the U.S. announcement as "essential."

"This very important engagement of a key member of the [Security] Council in the crisis is very welcome," Guehenno said. "It gives a chance to diplomacy and, I think, now it is very impor-



John Bolton

tant in the weeks ahead that the window that is open not be shut and every effort be made to take advantage of that diplomatic engagement to move the process forward."

"There is a sense of urgency and crisis in the council. The status quo is unsustainable. At the same time, there is also a recognition that one should not rush to precipitous decisions, that everything has

to be done to avoid increasing the risks of the front line between Ethiopia and Eritrea. So time has to be given for diplomacy," the undersecretary-general said.

The goal "is very clear to everybody," Guehenno said. The border between the two countries has to be demarcated and relations between the two must be normalized. Nevertheless, he added, "how you get there is extremely difficult."

Guehenno said he concluded after visiting the region recently that "the two countries by themselves will not resolve it. There is a need for real engagement of the international community."

"The United States has solid relations with the two countries, has the clout and credibility to move the process forward," he

said. "This is a very difficult mission ... it has to be recognized there is never a certainty of success, but it should be very much appreciated that the U.S. is prepared to take the diplomatic risk to engage itself to move the region away from war. That is what is needed."

Bolton said that the United States felt that the time was appropriate to undertake the serious diplomatic effort.



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U.S. Urges Ethiopia To Give Opposition Leaders Fair Hearing . . .

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charged, saying a "vibrant opposition, independent media and a robust civil society are essential elements of any democracy" and the United States expects the same from its "valued partner," Ethiopia.

Following is the text of the statement:

(begin text)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
January 6, 2006

STATEMENT BY SEAN MCCORMACK, SPOKESMAN

POLITICAL DISSENT AND DUE PROCESS IN ETHIOPIA

The United States remains gravely concerned by actions of the Government of Ethiopia in the cases of opposition, civil society,

and media leaders, including five staff members of the Voice of America, charged with capital offenses. In a judicial hearing on January 5, the Ethiopian courts denied bail to, and refused to hear a statement by, the 131 individuals who had been charged on December 21. Thousands more Ethiopians arrested since early November remain detained without charge.

The United States calls on the Ethiopian Government to ensure a fair, transparent and speedy trial for those charged, and to charge or release promptly those who remain detained without charge. Those detained have the right to and should be granted unimpeded access to legal counsel and to their families.

A vibrant opposition, independent media, and a robust civil society are essential elements of any democracy. The United States looks

to the Government of Ethiopia to provide the political space necessary for them to function. Steps that appear to criminalize dissent impede progress on democratization. Similarly, all sides must reject violence and abide by the rule of law.

Ethiopia is a valued partner for the United States. We commend the government and opposition parties in Parliament for their dialogue. We urge Government to continue its work with the opposition to ensure that the opposition can take its seats and manage the city of Addis Ababa, as well as effectively debate and legislate in the Parliament.

(end text)

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United States Sending Diplomatic Mission to Ethiopia, Eritrea . . .

(Continued from page 2)

UNMEE deployment brought the issue to a critical point, but underlying political problems regarding the border demarcation have not been resolved, the U.S. ambassador said. "The involvement by the United States has the prospect of possibly getting forward momentum."

"We want to move toward demarcation of the boundary," Bolton said. The issue "goes to the question of the parties' fundamental agreement with the Algiers Accord of 2000. If they are both still

serious about that, if they are both committed to what they agreed to in 2000 then we should go forward with demarcation. That is what we are going to try to do." The Algiers Accord of 2000 ended a two-year war between Eritrea and Ethiopia that was waged because of the border dispute.

Bolton said that the United States also was open to having a meeting of all the parties, including the European Union representatives, who witnessed the signing of the 2000 Algiers Accord.

For additional information on U.S.

policy, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Troops Join USAID in Bettering Life for Djiboutians

(This article originally appeared January 3 on the Department of Defense Web site <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2006/>. There are no publication restrictions.)

(begin byliner)

U.S. Service Members "Waging Peace" on Horn of Africa
By Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

CAMP LEMONIER, Djibouti, Jan. 3, 2006 -- Service members on an important front in the global war on terror are fighting hard, but not with weapons.

"We're waging peace as hard as we can," the commander of Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa told American Forces Press Service Jan. 2 at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti.

Marine Maj. Gen. Timothy Ghormley said the command has not had to fire a shot in anger. "The French had to kill a hyena once," he said.

He said Marines, airmen, sailors and soldiers in the command are strengthening and stabilizing the nations of the region.

"We are setting the conditions for victory," the general said. "We're avoiding another Iraq or Afghanistan."

The joint task force has its headquarters at Camp Lemonier, but it operates in Yemen, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda. Somalia is in the command's area, but the command does not operate there. The area is huge, roughly a third of the size

of the continental United States, with a total population of 167 million people.

Ghormley said he understands al Qaeda is active in Somalia, and he imagines the terror organization



Maj. Gen. Timothy Ghormley

would like to export its philosophy to the Ogaden area -- an area of Eastern Ethiopia, Djibouti and parts of Kenya -- and down the Swahili coast toward Kenya. The U.S. effort in the region stops al Qaeda from establishing a presence, he said.

"If we weren't there, they would be," the general said. "I can't imagine what's going on (in Somalia by al Qaeda), but I can't imagine it is good."

The Ogaden figures prominently in the command's strategy. The area is desolate and largely ungoverned. It's very poor, and the threat in the region is such that the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID] does not go in there. However, the Marines

"go into the ungoverned spaces," Ghormley said. "We go where there is a threat."

Every troop that leaves this camp is armed. But the rules of engagement are strict: self-defense only. Once the service members are in the door, so to speak, USAID can follow.

"We have a very good working relationship with USAID," Ghormley said. "We provide the impact, they provide the sustainability. We build a school; they provide the teachers and the books."

The command is trying to change the residents' impressions, and convince them that the United States is not at war with Islam. "We are at war with those who would use a terrorist ideology to attack our way of life," the general explained.

Ghormley said combat is not the task force's mission. "I have no direct-action mission. I have no kinetic mission. I do not have a mission to seek out and destroy," he said. "My mission is to influence the people's opinion through our presence."

Water was one way to do that in the Ogaden. The general said a small hamlet outside Gode -- almost directly in the center of the area -- provided an opportunity. "These people walked through six inches of dust," Ghormley said. "It probably hasn't rained there for 30 years."

The villagers wanted a pump to help them get water from the river to their fields. "Army Staff Sgt. Chuck McDermott went out and

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Bush Sends Eid al-Adha Greetings to World's Muslims

Bush Sends Eid al-Adha Greetings to World's Muslims

President Bush sent greetings to Muslims around the world January 9 for Eid al-Adha, the Islamic celebration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son out of obedience to God.

"When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Abraham placed his faith in God above all else," Bush said in a statement. "During Eid al-Adha, Muslims celebrate Abraham's devotion and give thanks for God's mercy and many blessings."

Bush highlighted the contributions that Muslim Americans make to American society. "Through generosity, compassion, and a commitment to faith, Muslim Americans have helped make our country stronger," he said.

Following is the text of Bush's statement:



Presidential Message: Eid Al-Adha

I send greetings to Muslims around the world as you celebrate Eid al-Adha.

When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Abraham placed his faith in God above all else. During Eid al-Adha, Muslims celebrate Abraham's devotion and give thanks for God's mercy and many blessings. Eid is also a time for demonstrating charity and reaching out to family, friends, and those in need.

America is blessed to have people of many religious beliefs who contribute to the diverse makeup of this country. Through generosity, compassion, and a commitment to faith, Muslim Americans have helped make our country stronger.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyous celebration. Eid Mubarak.

GEORGE W. BUSH ♦

U.S. Troops Join USAID in Bettering Life for Djiboutians . . .

(Continued from page 4)

bought a 14-horsepower pump and gave it to them," the general said.

The villagers designed the project and laid the pipes. They now have 15 hectares of irrigated land. Their corn, planted in October, is about three feet high. The group formed a co-op, and is reserving half of the crop to eat and half to sell.

Another program in the Ogaden was a hospital refurbishment in Jijiga, the chief city of the region. The hospital was built in 1945 and has not been rehabili-

tated since. The command will work on a "mother-child" ward and also to get running water to the hospital. "The people there thought it was a miracle that we came in and fixed the hospital," Ghormley said.

The command "does things on the cheap," Ghormley said. Troops provide medical, dental and veterinary care at various places throughout the region. The troops drill wells, build bridges, refurbish or build schools and clinics. And they could do more. "I have a \$15 million a year budget, which is pennies," he said.

The United States has a responsibility to its own citizens, but also to those in the region, Ghormley said.

"I tell people when they get assigned here that we're not better (than the people of the region), we're better off," he said. "And with that comes a responsibility to help lift the people of the region from just a level of existence to a level of subsistence -- where they can provide for themselves." ♦

State's Hughes Celebrates Eid al Adha

State's Hughes Celebrates Eid al Adha

U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen P. Hughes observed the Eid al-Adha at the Islamic Society of Frederick, Maryland, where she described the occasion as "a celebration of commitment and obedience to God and also of God's mercy and provision for all of us."

The Eid al-Adha, or Festival of Sacrifice, marks the conclusion of the pilgrimage to Mecca. It lasts four days and recalls the patriarch Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son (Ishmael in the Koranic account) rather than disobey God's word.

Hughes praised the "wonderful celebration of family and community" and read President Bush's Eid message. (See related story (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=January&x=20060109175301ndyblehs0.8724024&t=scv/lc-latest.html>))

A transcript of the under secretary's remarks follows:

(begin transcript)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
January 10, 2006

Remarks by Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes
Eid Celebration at the Islamic Society of Frederick, Maryland

UNDER SECRETARY
HUGHES: I want to thank Imam Hendi for his friendship and for his



Karen P. Hughes, U.S.
Under Secretary of State
for Public Diplomacy and
Public Affairs

leadership. I told him on the way in that he is a wonderful teacher. I happened to catch him on television the other night, and he does a wonderful job of speaking to children and teaching them about your faith and about the values that we all have in common as human beings. I am honored to be here to help celebrate Eid. It is great to see all the children and all their festive clothing and their smiling faces. This is a wonderful celebration of family and community. I am very, very honored that you have asked me to be here with you, that I was able to be here.

Eid is a celebration of commitment and obedience to God and also of God's mercy and provision for all of us. It is a time of family and community, a time of charity. I was struck by the Imam's message that every one of us has something to give for the common good. That is what I try to think about as I have the privilege of representing you and serving our country -- that it is an opportunity

for me to have something to give for the common good, and everyone of us has something that we can share with each other and contribute to the common good.

As President Bush has said:

"Through generosity, compassion, and a commitment to faith, Muslim Americans have helped make our country stronger." It is my honor to reach out to the Muslim-American community and to work with you as we work together to confront the threats of terrorism and the ideologies of hate in our world. And so I very much appreciate the opportunity to be here. I want to read to you a message from President Bush: "I send greetings to Muslims around the world as you celebrate Eid al-Adha.

When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Abraham placed his faith in God above all else. During Eid al-Adha, Muslims celebrate Abraham's devotion and give thanks for God's mercy and many blessings. Eid is also a time for demonstrating charity and reaching out to family, friends, and those in need. America is blessed to have people of many religious beliefs who contribute to the diverse makeup of this country. Through generosity, compassion, and a commitment to faith, Muslim Americans have helped make our country stronger. Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyous celebration."

And on behalf of President and Mrs. Bush and all of us, I am privileged to wish you Eid Mubarak. Thank you so much. ♦

World Travel Is Safer with US-VISIT, Security Official Says

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – After two years implementing new border entry policies and procedures, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reports that further measures still are ahead as the agency strives to smooth and speed the process for legitimate travel and “stop the bad guys.”

The two-year-old US-VISIT program is devoted to “keeping America’s doors open and our nation secure,” according to the program’s motto.

Incorporating biometric entry procedures at border entry points was a key goal when the program began in January 2004. U.S. procedures now require an individual to undergo a digital finger scan upon entering the United States. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/03-63171.html>).)

US-VISIT Director James Williams says one significant success is that the program has not caused the disruption that critics anticipated.

“There was a lot of fear and paranoia about US-VISIT,” he said at a Washington briefing January 10, “in terms of how it might increase processing times at the borders. In fact, it has not.

“At airports and seaports, we have slightly decreased processing time,” Williams said. “At our land ports of entry, we have in some cases significantly reduced the processing time, in some cases, from 10 to 11 minutes, down to two or three minutes.”

US-VISIT has processed more than 44 million visitors in its two years. Border officials have plucked 970 individuals from that river of travelers because enhanced security procedures identified them as criminals, drug traffickers or immigration violators.

Williams said DHS, the State Department and other law enforcement agencies involved in ensuring border security now are working to incorporate more new technologies into the border approval process in hopes of further facilitating the process for the 21st century.

By October 2005, DHS will require that some visitors entering the United States have an e-passport – a document provided by countries of origin that incorporates an integrated computer chip that stores biographic information in addition to information about the traveler printed on the document.

Nations that participate in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) are being asked to upgrade their travel documents in this way to insure their travelers retain the privilege of foregoing a visa application in U.S. travel. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Jun/21-7364.html>).)

Visitors from these countries are considered low risks for attempting to settle illegally in the United States because of prosperous, stable conditions and commitments in their home countries.

“We are very appreciative of the work that the 27 visa waiver countries are undertaking,” Williams said. “They also believe that this



A Customs And Border Protection Blackhawk Helicopter Swoops On Suspects
(Photo CBP)

will enhance security and they’re working very diligently to meet that date.”

U.S. HELPING OTHER NATION IRON OUT NEW SYSTEM

Williams said DHS has taken a number of steps to help other nations properly develop the new e-passport, including mock port-of-entry exercises to test new document readers that will equip each entry station to scan the microchip contained in the passports.

“We are trying to work with the rest of the world to enhance security and to improve immigration-border management around the world,” Williams said. “You do that through harmonizing around standards, technology and business processes and that’s what we’ve been trying to do.”

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Meet Benjamin Franklin, America's First International Celebrity

By Stephen Kaufman
Washington File Staff Writer

Without inherited wealth or social position, the 10th son of a Boston candle and soap maker rose to become one of the most intriguing men of the 18th century, influencing scientific research and invention, education, political thought, journalism, all the while playing a pivotal role in the struggle for U.S. independence from Great Britain.

Benjamin Franklin, whose 300th birthday will be celebrated January 17, can be considered the first American international celebrity, whose fame from his endeavors in science and journalism preceded him to the capitals of Britain and France, where he argued and advocated for the rights of his newly formed nation.

In 1776, at age 70, Franklin arrived in Paris, dressed in a fur hat and a plain brown suit, epitomizing the ideal of the simple but dignified man of the New World, standing in stark contrast to the ornate royal court and aristocracy. A compilation of his sayings in Poor Richard's Almanac, urging common sense, thrift and honest habits, had been translated into French, and he seemed to personify both Voltaire's enlightened simple man, and Rousseau's "noble savage."

Franklin's mission was to secure French financial and military support against Britain; in doing so, he

found himself the object of a personality cult. His portrait soon appeared on French medallions, rings, watches and snuffboxes, and fashionable ladies adopted the "coiffure a la Franklin" to imitate his fur cap. America's first diplomat was also its first superstar.



Benjamin Franklin

The alliance he brokered between France and the American colonies ultimately secured their independence, but it required skillful diplomacy and clever intrigue, including the use of spies, and Franklin accomplished his task nearly single-handedly. As the representative of a loose handful of colonies, Franklin was dealing with one of the 18th century's great world powers. He had to convince France that military aid and an alliance, tantamount to a war against Britain, was desirable because of the promise of victory and future trade

benefits.

In reviewing a recent television documentary of Franklin, the Web site Underground Online said the figure of this stocky, balding man who lived long ago is "not just the man in your wallet on a lucky day," referring to his portrait on the U.S. \$100 bill.

"[H]e's the guy behind America's first public lending library, first nonreligious college, and first national newspaper," it said. "He invented everything from musical instruments to bifocals to the Franklin stove, documented the Gulf Stream, and made arguably the most important scientific breakthrough of the 18th century with his study of electricity."

Franklin's witticisms and quotations from Poor Richard's Almanac and other sources have survived into modern day English. Any athlete knows the phrase, "no pain, no gain." In the business world, there is the proverb "haste makes

waste," and in long-winded meetings, most people might find themselves agreeing with him that "the worst wheel of the cart makes the most noise." In moments of humor and despair, we also may borrow Franklin's saying that "in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

Paying tribute to his wide sphere of influence, biographer Carl Van Doren wrote, "In any age, in any place, Franklin would have been

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Meet Benjamin Franklin, America's First International Celebrity . . .

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great. ... Even his genius could not specialize him."

CIVIC SCIENTIST

In its October 2003 issue, the magazine *Physics Today* declared Franklin to be the "model of a civic scientist," meaning "one who uses his or her special scientific knowledge and skills to influence policy and inform the public."

The popular image of a man flying a kite that was struck by lightning references what might be Franklin's most important contribution to science. In his 1752 experiment and the subsequent book *Experiments and Observations on Electricity*, he confirmed that lightning is an electrical phenomenon. In so doing, he opened to the scientific world the idea that electricity might be a valuable field of study, leading ultimately to many of the everyday applications of electricity used by people all over the world.

For this, and other scientific achievements, Franklin gained fame and recognition from the European scientific community. He was elected as a fellow of the Royal Society of London, and in 1753, he received the society's Copley Medal, which was perhaps the 18th century equivalent to a Nobel Prize. In 1772, Franklin was elected to France's Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris, which was an exceptional honor because the academy was

restricted to having only eight non-French members at a given time.

FOUNDING FATHER AND PHILANTHROPIST

Benjamin Franklin was also the only American who was involved intimately with the four most important documents pertaining to the establishment of the United States – the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the 1778 Treaty of Alliance with France, the 1783 Treaty of Paris that ended hostilities with Britain, and the U. S. Constitution, ratified in 1789. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2005/Aug/30-354107.html>).)

As a humanitarian, Franklin was an outspoken advocate of the abolition of the slavery of African Americans and their integration and education into the new country. When he died in Philadelphia on April 17, 1790, his will established a 200-year trust fund for the cities of Boston and Philadelphia that was used for a variety of residential loan programs during its lifetime. In 1990, its accumulated sum in Philadelphia of more than \$2 million was used for scholarships for local secondary school students, and the accumulated \$5 million Boston trust fund established the Franklin Institute of Boston.

An exhibit, "Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World," was timed to coincide with the tercentenary, and explores six facets of

his life in detail. Currently in Philadelphia, the exhibit will tour several U.S. cities before ending in Paris December 4, 2007 through March 30, 2008. More information on the exhibit and the tercentenary celebration is available on the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary (<http://www.benfranklin300.com/>) Web site.

In London, the only surviving home in which Franklin lived currently is being restored and is scheduled to open to visitors on January 17 as part of the tercentenary. For additional information, see Benjamin Franklin House (<http://www.benjaminfranklinhouse.org/site/sections/default.htm>).

More information also can be found on the Web site of The Friends of Franklin, Inc. (<http://www.benfranklin2006.org/>), an international society "dedicated to promoting fellowship, learning, and the spirit of Franklin."

For more information about American people, places and customs, see U.S. Life and Culture (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

More Countries Want To Join Key International Economic Group

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- More countries have expressed interest in becoming members of the international organization devoted to assisting sound economic expansion around the world, says the U.S. representative to the body.

In a January 10 address in Washington, Constance Morella said countries not currently members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) see the Paris-based group as an important forum that can help them design and implement policies leading to obtaining more benefits from globalization.

Morella is the U.S. permanent representative to the OECD.

"Developing countries cannot contribute to the successful development of the world as a whole unless they become strong partners in the quest for global economic development," Morella said.

As developing countries' economic security and overall well-being improves, so will that of the rest of the world, she said.

Today OECD members account for 60 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP), 76 percent of world trade and 19 percent of the world's population, she said.

"The OECD has left an indelible mark on economic development and spans areas as diverse as labor, trade, migration, education, energy, health, industry, taxation and the environment," Morella said.

In addition to providing nonbinding principles in such areas as corporate governance and anti-bribery measures to its 30 member countries, the OECD is working with 70 additional countries to help them understand the "rules of the road" -- or operating principles --



Constance Morella

for succeeding in the global marketplace, she said.

The organization's Business Industry Advisory Council allows countries to "set aside rivalries and create a community of nations," Morella said.

The "common understanding" of these principles by OECD members and nonmembers is that they have a positive effect on the international trade and investment environment for U.S. multinational companies, reducing compliance costs and minimizing conflicts between the United States' and other

governments' businesses and regulators, she said.

Morella, a former member of the U.S. Congress, said the OECD's work has expanded over the years and now is concentrated in four areas: establishing guidelines for economic and business activity; addressing objectives shared by a majority of its members as well as nonmembers; helping members and nonmembers meet domestic challenges; and identifying areas that may pose future challenges and require governments to prepare now to meet them.

Morella is the first former member of Congress to serve in the role of OECD representative.

The organization is "a workshop of the global economy" where standards are formed, said Alan Larson, former under secretary of state for economic, business and agricultural affairs. Larson, who spoke after Morella, is a former U.S. representative to the OECD.

OECD is the successor organization to an international program known as the Marshall Plan established after World War II to help Europe recover from the war

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

White House Says Iran's Nuclear Program May Need U.N. Referral

Washington -- White House press secretary Scott McClellan said that while the Bush administration continues to support peaceful efforts to resolve the standoff over Iran's nuclear program, the issue might need to be referred to the U.N. Security Council if Tehran continues to refuse to comply with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Speaking January 9, McClellan said a "growing majority of the international community" is telling Iran that it needs to comply with its agreements and to negotiate with interlocutors such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom, (the EU-3), as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "in good faith about the way forward."

"If those negotiations run their course and Iran does not act in good faith and does not come into compliance, then there is no other option but for the international community to look to the Security Council," McClellan said.

According to press reports, Iran said January 9 it plans to resume nuclear research and development, ending a two-year suspension and jeopardizing negotiations over its nuclear activities with the EU-3, which shares the U.S. concern

that Iran could be trying to develop nuclear weapons under the guise of a civilian program.

"Our view is that all countries should adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty," McClellan said.



I ran-Nuclear-Power-Plant

The issue, he said, is "a matter of trust," adding that Iran "has shown over the course of the last couple of decades that [it] cannot be trusted" because it concealed its activities and violated international agreements.

"This is a serious matter. It's a serious concern," he said. Referring to recent statements by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that called for the elimination of Israel, as well as other inflammatory remarks, McClellan said the Iranian regime's actions and comments "only further underscore

why it is so important that the international community not let Iran develop a nuclear weapon."

In criticizing the Iranian regime, the press secretary said the United States stands with "the people of Iran who want to live in greater freedom."

"This is a regime that continues to deny the people their right to live in greater freedom, and that ignores their wishes, and pursues nuclear weapons programs, and has been a state sponsor of terrorism. I think it is a regime that is out of step with its people," he said.

For additional information on U.S. pol-

icy, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html) and Middle East and North Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/>).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U. S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Determined To Fight Trafficking, Bush Says, Signing New Law

By Jeffrey Thomas
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Signing legislation January 10 that strengthens U.S. efforts to fight human trafficking at home and abroad, President Bush reiterated American determination "to fight and end this modern form of slavery."

"We are called by conscience and compassion to bring this cruel practice to an end," said Bush during a ceremony in Washington to sign legislation renewing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the first comprehensive U.S. law aimed at deterring trafficking, punishing traffickers and protecting and rehabilitating the victims.

The new law expands funding for anti-trafficking programs in the United States and abroad and seeks to combat specific problems such as trafficking by international peacekeepers or by U.S. federal employees and contractors working overseas.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) strengthens current U.S. anti-trafficking laws and authorizes new funds to the Federal Bureau of Investigation to combat both domestic and international trafficking.

Internationally, the new law requires U.S. assistance programs for post-conflict and humanitarian emergencies to include anti-trafficking measures, and it includes provisions for monitoring and combating forced labor and child labor in foreign countries.

Trafficking in human beings involves the forced labor of men, women and children in the commercial sex industry as prostitutes, as well as forced labor in factories, fields, restaurants and homes.

the problem of demand," the president said. "Those who pay for the chance to sexually abuse children and teenage girls must be held to account. So we'll investigate and prosecute the customers, the un-



President Bush signs H.R. 972, the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005, in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2006. The bill directs the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the State Dept., and Dept. of Defense to incorporate anti-trafficking and protection measures for vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, into their post-conflict and humanitarian emergency assistance and program activities. White House photo by Eric Draper

"Human traffickers operate with greed and without conscience, treating their victims as nothing more than goods and commodities for sale to the highest bidder," Bush said, adding that thousands of teenagers and young girls are brought into the United States every year where they are "forced to submit to unspeakable evil."

"We cannot put the criminals out of business until we also confront

scrupulous adults who prey on the young and the innocent."

The TVPRA strengthens the use of money laundering, racketeering and civil and criminal forfeiture statutes against traffickers, and it establishes the crime of sex trafficking under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. It also directs the Department of Justice to conduct a biennial analysis of trafficking and commercial sex acts statistics

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U.S. Determined To Fight Trafficking, Bush Says . . .

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inside the United States.

In his remarks, Bush spoke of the "duty to reach out to victims of trafficking, some of whom were smuggled into this country as children."

"The legislation I signed today will help us provide important new services to these victims, including appointing a guardian for young victims and providing access to residential treatment facilities to help victims get a chance at a better life," he said.

The TVPRA authorizes several pilot projects as well as grants to nongovernmental organizations to provide counseling and help to re-integrate victims of trafficking into society. These include pilot treatment facilities for both domestic and foreign victims of trafficking.

Under U.S. law, victims of trafficking are not deported. They have the right to stay in the United States, either through "continued presence," which allows victims to stay pending an outcome of a trial, or through a "T" visa, which allows them to stay for up to three years and to thereafter apply for legal permanent status.

Representative Chris Smith, a Republican from New Jersey who authored the original anti-trafficking law as well as the reauthorization, said in a January 9 statement that

"human trafficking is not a criminal activity exclusive to foreign countries – it happens within our own borders, within our own communities."

"The 2005 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act strengthens and expands our efforts and allows law enforcement to continue to liberate the women and children who are forced and coerced into slavery," he said.

According to estimates by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the TVPRA will provide \$361 million over the next two years to combat trafficking.

Trafficking provides organized crime with annual profits in the range of \$8 billion to \$10 billion, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, which estimates 600,000-800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year, while millions more are trafficked internally within the borders of countries, including somewhere between 14,500 and 17,500 in the United States.

Worldwide, more than 3,000 traffickers were convicted last year – an increase from the previous year, according to the State Department's 2005 Trafficking in Persons Report (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/>).

"We will continue to call on other nations to take action against traf-

ficking within their own borders," Bush pledged.

See fact sheet (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/other/58557.htm>) on the TVPRA on the Web site of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Web site also includes a fact sheet (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/fs/2005/55233.htm>) on Rescuing Victims of Modern-Day Slavery.

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060110-3.html>) of the president's remarks at the signing ceremony is available on the White House Web site. A statement (http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/nj04_smith/prtraffickinglaw.html) by Representative Smith about the TVPRA is available on his Web site.

For additional information on U.S. anti-trafficking efforts both domestically and worldwide, see Human Trafficking (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/human_trafficking.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Eager To Attract More Foreign Students, Rice Says

By Anthony Kujawa
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States has "never been more eager" to welcome foreign students to its shores and to send more Americans to study abroad, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice says, outlining four principles to guide U.S. efforts to increase educational exchanges January 5.

"To be successful, our government and our universities must forge a new partnership for education exchange, a partnership that rests on new thinking and new action," Rice said at the U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education.

The two-day summit, designed to strengthen international education partnerships, included participation from more than 100 college and university presidents from all 50 U.S. states, leading public and private research institutions, as well as community colleges, historically black institutions, Hispanic-serving institutions, religiously affiliated institutions and women's colleges.

"As the global center of gravity shifts from West to East, and as regions like the Broader Middle East struggle to embrace democratic reform, American students must be at the forefront of our engagement with countries like China and India, Iraq and Afghanistan," she said.

The secretary outlined four principles to guide U.S. efforts to increase educational exchanges:

Expand exchange efforts such as the Fulbright and Gilman International Scholarship programs;

Cultivate new relationships for education exchange with countries playing an increasingly important international role;

Make U.S. universities more accessible to talented but underprivileged students and to students of diverse backgrounds; and

Continue to improve visa policies.

Rice said the United States must build on successful educational exchange programs such as the Fulbright scholarship program, which has brought more than 250,000 students from 185 countries to study in the United States since 1946, and the Gilman Scholarship Program which has enabled 2,200 U.S. students to study abroad since 2000. (For additional information see Fulbright Program (<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/fulbright/>) and Gilman Scholarship Program (<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/educationusa/abroadgilman.htm>).)

Earlier in the day, President Bush addressed the summit, announcing the National Security Language Initiative, a program to marshal the resources of four federal agencies to increase the numbers of Americans fluent in critical-need foreign languages.

"To prepare young Americans to understand the peoples who will help to define the 21st century, nothing is more important than our ability to converse in their native tongues," Rice said, adding the initiative is a critical goal of the Bush administration.

U.S. IMPROVED "EVERY ASPECT" OF VISA PROCESS

Officials say new U.S. visa procedures following the September

11 terrorist attacks resulted in some delays for certain applicants when originally implemented, but that the United States since has improved its ability to efficiently process visa applications.

"There are legitimate security concerns that must be met and we need your help in meeting them. I will make a promise to you: if you are prepared to help us to make certain that we can achieve a balance between openness and security, we are prepared to work with you to do so," she added.

She said the State Department is hiring more consular officers, training them better and sending them into foreign communities to give local students advice on how to apply for a visa. U.S. embassies and consulates also have established special, expedited visa interviews for prospective foreign students, she said.

"We are now approving 97 percent of our visas in just one or two days and we are radically shortening the amount of time that it takes to process the rest," Rice said adding that the number of visas issued in 2005 increased for the first time since the September 11, 2001, attacks.

BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE

As a former professor at Stanford University, Rice said, the "transformative capability" of U.S. higher education is "very clear" to her.

"I witnessed the life-changing potential of international exchange among my American students who

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Guide to Higher Education in the United States Now Available

Washington -- A new publication to help students from around the world learn about opportunities for higher education in the United States now is available from the Department of State.

The electronic publication, *College and University Education in the United States* (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/1105/ijse/ijse1105.htm>), addresses topics such as the types of colleges and universities, education costs, campus life, possible sources of financial aid, accreditation and the grading system.

Featuring an introduction by Secretary of Education Margaret Spell-

ings and a welcome by Karen Hughes, under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs. *College and University Education in the United States* provides answers and extensive information to international students who wish to study in the United States.

Highlights in the publication include: resources for international students and foreign student advisers, including EducationUSA -- the State Department's global network of more than 450 advising and information centers in 170 countries; financial planning information; a video about the foreign student experience as described in

first-person accounts by international students; a college life photo gallery; and useful links.

< i> College and University Education in the United States is part of the Department of State's electronic journal series. It currently is available in English, French and Spanish, and soon will be available in Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese and Russian.

A complete listing (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/journals.htm>) of State Department eJournals is available on the USINFO Web site.

♦

U.S. Eager To Attract More Foreign Students, . . .

(Continued from page 14)

studied abroad and among the diverse foreign students who studied at Stanford from every region of the world who regularly enriched my classrooms in ways that only they could do," she said.

As secretary of state, Rice said she and President Bush often meet leaders of other countries who have attended different kinds of schools in the United States.

"They've gone to community colleges, they've gone to small colleges, they've gone to land-grant colleges, they've gone to research universities. They've all had the common experience of being -- of studying in America. And the experience then becomes one that binds them to us in a way that can never be broken," she said.

On a recent trip to Saudi Arabia, for example, Rice said she met with leaders -- one of whom mentioned during a meeting, "I'm a Trojan," referring to the mascot of the University of Southern California, and another who said he was a "Pioneer" referring to the University of Denver, Rice's alma mater.

But Rice added, "in Saudi Arabia, it is true of my generation that these students studied in America. But with the next generation, they are not studying in America. That is something that we must correct and that we must change."

Rice said one of her "highest priorities" is to reinvigorate U.S. efforts to connect America to the people of the world through education.

"Our citizens learn from the different perspectives that foreign students bring to our classrooms. ... And when these students ultimately return to their home overseas, they have new friends that they have met and memories of America that they will never forget," Rice said.

For additional information on studying in the United States, see the State Department Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs EducationUSA (<http://www.educationusa.state.gov/>) Web site and the electronic journal, *College and University Education in the United States* (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/1105/ijse/ijse1105.htm>). ♦

Laura Bush, State's Hughes Announce Student Exchange

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes and first lady Laura Bush announced new programs to help U.S. higher education institutions enroll international students.

In January 6 remarks to the U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education, both women stressed the Bush administration's desire to expand contact between peoples.

President Bush, addressing the summit the previous day, announced the National Security Language Initiative, a broad effort to expand the number of American speakers of critical-need foreign languages. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jan/06-841144.html>).

Later in January, in the West African nation of Ghana, Laura Bush and six university presidents will unveil the Textbooks and Learning Materials Program. An effort to link U.S. minority-serving colleges with African institutions, the program will supply African students with textbooks and school supplies.

The first lady also praised a University of Nebraska program that brings female Afghan teachers to the United States for training. By living with Nebraska host families, participants learn about American life.

"We want more people around

the world to see and know the real picture" about how Americans live, Bush said.

REACHING OUT

Hughes expressed her determination that the United States be the "world's education destination" and announced initiatives to attract foreign students to the full range of U.S. higher education institutions, from research universi-



U.S. first lady Laura Bush (L) and Under Secretary of State for Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes smile at the Summit of U.S. Presidents on Higher Education.
REUTERS/Yuri

ties to community colleges.

A new Fulbright Science and Technology Award, designed to be the leading scholarship of its kind, will afford top math and science students the opportunity to pursue graduate studies in the United States.

Other programs will extend exchange opportunities to nontraditional students and historically under-represented groups, not least

by encouraging foreign enrollment in America's many community colleges.

The under secretary said she hoped more West European immigrants, Africans and Latin American indigenous peoples will choose to study in the United States.

Hughes also announced a Department of State effort to organize traveling delegations of U.S. university administrators. These would explain to foreign educators and students the opportunities available at U.S. institutions and encourage enrollment.

Hughes also promised resources to help needy American students continue their studies overseas. As part of the National Security Language Initiative, the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Program will receive a 40 percent funding increase, she said.

These programs, she suggested, would prove a wise investment in global peace

and prosperity.

"We seek," Hughes said, "to unleash people's potential; our opponents seek to constrain it."

For additional information on the summit and educational opportunities see Study in the U.S. (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/education/study_in_the_us.html) ♦

Bush Approves Funding Boost for Bird Flu Prevention

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration has approved supplemental spending of \$91.4 million to enhance the Agriculture Department's efforts to prevent and prepare for any potential cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), part of \$3.8 billion for pandemic flu preparedness, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The supplemental funds will allow USDA to increase surveillance in the United States and boost assistance to countries affected by the virus in hopes of preventing the spread of the disease and to protect human and animal health, said Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns in a December 30, 2005, press release.

"These funds will enable us to intensify our surveillance in the United States and deliver increased assistance to countries impacted by the virus, in hopes of preventing further spread and protecting both human and animal health," Johanns said in the release.

President Bush approved the funding, part of the Defense Department spending bill for the fiscal year ending September 30, on December 30, 2005. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/03-762801.html>).

Portions of the funds also would be devoted to trade compliance, research and development of new vaccines and preparedness training, according to USDA.

The poultry industry in the United States is applying biosecurity

measures to minimize a potential spread of avian influenza, or bird flu, a State Department official said.

The measures include ensuring that commercial flocks are prevented from coming into contact with wild or migratory birds, controlling vehicles from entering a poultry farm, disinfecting vehicles leaving a farm, routinely cleaning poultry cages and daily changing feed and water, the official said in an interview with the Washington File January 9.

USDA is already collaborating with the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Program, the World Health Organization and other international partners to control the influenza virus in countries where it is already endemic, the USDA release said.

USDA also is working closely with the U.S. departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Interior, and Homeland Security, and with state governments, Native American tribal leaders and industry sectors to prepare an emergency response if HPAI is detected in the United States.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) restricts the import into the United States of live birds and poultry products from countries where HPAI is known to exist. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) requires member countries to report any cases of HPAI.

Some U.S. trade partners have overreacted to reports of HPAI in Asia and parts of Europe and have enacted trade restrictions on poul-

try products from such countries as the United States that are free of the disease, according to the State Department official.

Yet countries that are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are obligated to keep import restrictions within OIE safety guidelines, said the official with State's Bureau of Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs.

Those guidelines say that a country wanting to restrict trade of poultry and poultry products must provide scientific justification for exceeding the OIE's international guidelines.

OIE has reported HPAI in Cambodia, China, Croatia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Taipei China, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine and Vietnam. (See update (http://www.oie.int/download/AVIAN_INFLUENZA/A_AI-Asia.htm) of avian influenza in animals on OIE Web site.

In 2005 the United States exported nearly 2.7 billion kilograms of poultry.

For more information, see Bird Flu (Avian Influenza) (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html).

The USDA press release (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentid=2005/12/0566.xml) on U.S. funding for avian influenza prevention and preparedness is available on the USDA Web site.

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U.S. Health Agency Urges Families To Plan for Pandemic

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is offering a guidebook for families and households to plan for infectious disease.

HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt released Pandemic Influenza Planning: A Guide for Individuals and Families January 6.

"This new guide is important reading in every household," Leavitt said. "It explains the challenges posed by a pandemic outbreak and identifies common-sense steps Americans should take in their homes now to prepare for a pandemic."

A severe influenza pandemic has not stricken the United States in more than 30 years, so the guide braces households on how to plan for illness, suggesting families stock up on vital supplies, for instance. It also attempts to raise awareness about the danger of spreading infection and how to avoid it.

The guide for households follows earlier HHS advice on pandemic planning offered to small businesses (<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab4.html>) as part of a larger administration initiative to raise awareness about the possibility of pandemic influenza.

The planning guide (<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab3.html>) for individuals and families is available on the official U.S. government Web site for information on pandemic flu and avian influenza, a site sponsored by HHS.

The text of the HHS statement follows:

(begin text)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
News Release
January 6, 2006

Secretary Leavitt Releases Guide to Help Individuals and Families Get Informed and Be Prepared For a Pandemic



Michael Leavitt, HHS Secretary

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt today announced the release of "Pandemic Influenza Planning: A Guide for Individuals and Families," a new tool to help Americans understand the threat of pandemic influenza and specific actions they can take to protect themselves and their families.

"Pandemics are global in nature, but their impact is local. When the next pandemic strikes, it is likely to touch the lives of every individual, family and community," Secretary Leavitt said. "This new guide is important reading in every household. It explains the challenges posed by a pandemic outbreak and identifies common-sense

steps Americans should take in their homes now to prepare for a pandemic."

Secretary Leavitt released the guide at a Pandemic Planning Summit with Arizona officials and community leaders today. This summit is the second in a series of forums that will be convened in each state over the next few months.

The handbook includes a "Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist for Individuals and Families" and "Family Emergency Health Information Sheet" to help people gather information and resources they may need. The checklist breaks activities into three categories: "To plan for a pandemic;" "To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection;" and "Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home." Examples of specific preparations include:

- Having any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes and vitamins;

- Talking with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick or what will be needed to care for them in another home;

- Teaching children to wash hands frequently and appropriately, covering coughs and sneezes with tissues, and modeling the correct behavior;

- Having ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, soups, bottled water and cleaning supplies.

(Continued on page 20)

Guidelines Needed to Help Care for Children During Emergencies

Evidence-based guidelines for the care of children in emergency situations should be developed and distributed to international relief organizations, say researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Maryland and the World Health Organization (WHO).

In the study, *Child Health in Complex Emergencies*, the researchers found that the highest mortality rates following armed conflicts, natural disasters, population displacements or famines are often among children younger than 5.

The study was funded by a grant from the WHO Department of Child and Adolescent Health to the Johns Hopkins Center for Refugee and Disaster Response.

According to a January 3 Johns Hopkins press release, the most common causes of death are diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, measles, malaria and malnutrition; these are also major causes of death in countries with high child mortality rates.

"The major causes of child mortality in complex emergencies are well known and we have learned how to manage these conditions in stable situations," said senior study author Dr. William Moss.



Victims of Tsunami Disaster

Conflict or disaster often exacerbates the magnitude and severity of such illnesses, he added, requiring rapid assessment and treatment of large numbers of severely ill children.

"What we need," Moss said, "are simple, easy-to-use guidelines that are brought together in a single package for the different levels of health workers caring for children in complex emergencies."

The researchers came to their

conclusions after reviewing previously published literature and interviewing representatives from international relief organizations.

They found that in emergency situations, most relief organizations use WHO, UNICEF and other ministry of health guidelines that are intended for stable environments. But few studies have assessed how effective the interventions are in reducing child mortality in complex emergencies.

Special needs of unaccompanied children and common mental health problems of all children should be addressed, the authors said.

The full text (<http://www.nap.edu/books/0309100631/html/>) of the report may be viewed online

on the Web site of the National Academies Press. Information for ordering the print copies of the report also is provided on that Web site.

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World Travel Is Safer with US-VISIT, . . .

(Continued from page 7)

Another new standard in the planning stage will require visitors to undergo a digital scan on 10 fingerprints rather than on only two.

Williams said this is necessary to avoiding confusing an innocent person's prints with those of someone on the criminal watch list. Obtaining more data from each individual will help prevent the misidentification of innocent people.

In the years ahead, the United States also will implement new standards for entry at its land borders with Canada and Mexico, some of the nation's busiest border points.

Those forthcoming policy changes are being viewed with some skepticism by people who frequently make those crossings, but Williams said the changes will be designed to has-

ten the movement of long lines of vehicles that back up on the borders.

"We're looking at how we can leverage 21st century technology and business processes," he said, "and then transform the borders to meet not only our national security [concerns] but our joint economic and prosperity needs."

For additional information on U.S. policies see Visas and Passports (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Health Agency Urges Families To Plan for Pandemic

(Continued from page 18)

plies on-hand for an extended stay at home.

The release of this new tool builds on the Administration's overall planning to increase pandemic preparedness. President Bush has outlined a coordinated government strategy that includes the establishment of the new International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, stockpiling of vaccines and antiviral medications, expansion of early-warning systems domestically and abroad and new funding and initiatives for local and state level preparedness.

In December, Secretary Leavitt met with senior officials from all

50 states and launched a series of preparedness summits to be held in every state over the next several months with the goal of enhancing state and local preparedness. In addition to today's guide, Secretary Leavitt has issued preparedness checklists for businesses and state and local health departments to aide their pandemic preparedness efforts. Next week, the Secretary will participate in state planning summits in Vermont, West Virginia, Rhode Island and Georgia.

Additional information to help schools, the travel industry and faith-based and community organizations increase their preparedness will be issued in coming weeks. A copy of the "Pandemic Influenza

Planning: A Guide for Individuals and Families," other checklists and pandemic planning information is available online at www.pandemicflu.gov (<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>)

(end text)

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